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ABSTRACT

This guide presents a course outline and description of drama/theater arts that satisfies Idaho state graduation requirements for humanities. After a brief description of the philosophy of such courses, the guide describes the critical components that drama/theater course must significantly deal with: aesthetic perception, creative expression through performance, historical and cultural appreciation, and aesthetic valuing and appreciation. The guide then presents detailed goals (including develop a working knowledge of being perceptive and selective in observing and responding to a physical state of being; express feelings and meaning through pantomime skills; understand and use the mechanics of acting; evaluate a theatrical activity as a mirror of the human condition; and develop an appreciation for the cooperative nature of theater) and associated course objectives for each of the critical components described. (RS)

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State Department of Education
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0027

Drama/Theater Arts

Course Outline and Description

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Philosophy

DRAMA is inherent in life.

> Drama is the struggle to remain alive, to grow, to perpetuate the species. With humankind it is also the search for understanding, enlightenment and comfort. Drama leads the participant to moments of direct experience that transcends mere knowledge, enriches the imagination, and touches the heart and soul as well as the mind.

THEATER is the art form of drama.

> "Art (theater) is a mould, in which to capture for a moment that elusive element which is life itself . . . life, hurrying away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose," said the poet, Willa Cather. Theater allows us to select a slice of life and put it in a mold to slow it down for a moment, so it can be examined. Theater allows us to communicate that special view of life to others. Theater permits us to select a moment from the human condition and use human beings, relating to each other in a space and a time frame, to communicate the idea of that moment to others. Theater becomes a mirror of life that comments on what it is like to be human, whether in the past or in the present.

Beginning, Intermediate and/or Advanced Theater Classes

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Courses in drama/theater will be based on the Art of Theater and will emphasize the use of the intellect as well as the development of one's sensitivity, creativity, and the capacity to make reasoned, aesthetic decisions while extending the range of human experience in a historical, ethnic and racial framework. Since the uniqueness of the individual is stressed, students will acquire a knowledge of and regard for themselves and others as individuals. Students will develop a positive self-concept, creative thinking, and an ability to perceive and interact successfully with others. Language is a primary component; therefore, students involved with drama/theater will develop poise, confidence, composure, and versatility in verbal and nonverbal expression.

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CRITICAL COMPONENTS

To satisfy the state graduation requirement for humanities, drama/theater classes must deal significantly with

Aesthetic Perception is a heightened awareness that provides a stimulus for imagination and creativity.

Creative Expression Through Performance is the expression of an idea through performance, using awareness and imaginative skills with the skills of performance.

Historical and Cultural Appreciation is an exploration and understanding of history and racial and ethnic influences through a theatrical framework.

Aesthetic Valuing and Appreciation is the creation of a personal set of aesthetic values, beginning with an internal valuing experienced by the student and an external evaluation expressed by the student.

COURSE OUTLINE
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

A. **Goal: Students will develop a working knowledge of being perceptive and selective in observing and responding to one's own physical state of being.**

Objectives. Students will

1. become aware of the kinship of the external and internal stimuli.
2. become aware of sound stimuli.
3. become aware of visual stimuli.
4. become aware of the physical objects that surround the actor on the stage.
5. respond spontaneously to changing and unanticipated stimuli.

B. Goal: **Students will develop a working knowledge of how the emotional awareness will affect the character being portrayed by the actor, as well as the artistic creation of the other practitioners.**

Objectives. Students will

1. recognize one's own emotions and identify them.
2. compare one's emotions with those of the characters that will be portrayed.

C. Goal: **Students will develop a working knowledge of how the design aesthetics will affect the aesthetic perception.**

Objectives. Students will

1. study and put into practice the following design elements and reflect on the total perception:
   a. set
   b. costumes
   c. lighting
   d. sound
   e. makeup
   f. properties

Creative Expression Through Performance

Creative Nonverbal Communication. The art of acting without words.

A. Goal: **Students will express feelings and meaning through pantomime skills.**

Objectives. Students will

1. use basic pantomime techniques (illusion, clic, stylized movements, makeup).
2. recognize and understand the concept of illusion.
3. increase skills in expressive movement.
4. create a complete expressive movement.
5. create a pantomime using costume and makeup.

Improvisation: **The impromptu portrayal of a character or a scene without rehearsal or preparation.**

B. **Goal: Students will use improvisation as a tool to achieve understanding of the dramatic process (who, what, where, when why).**

Objectives. Students will

1. use improvisation with unscripted material.
2. increase skills in creative problem solving.
3. work as an ensemble in an improvisation.

Using the voice.

C. **Goal: Students will effectively use the voice as a tool in the creation and performance of a character.**

Objectives: Students will

1. use the voice for communicating thought and feelings.
2. identify how sounds are formed.
3. increase articulation skills.
4. increase skills in vocal expression and projection.

Basic Acting

D. **Goal: Students will understand and use the mechanics of acting.**

Objectives. Students will

1. use the stage vernacular effectively.
2. increase skills in the creation of a character, using body and voice.
3. use the concepts of stage movement.
4. develop memorization skills.
5. demonstrate an understanding of characterization, conflict, setting and motivation as it relates to the wholeness of the scene.
6. create a believable character on stage.
7. develop a sense of responsibility to the ensemble.
8. gain confidence before an audience.

Advanced Acting: **Participation in the whole acting experience**

E. **Goal: Students will successfully participate in the final production of a scene or play.**

Objectives. Students will

1. understand the inner motivation of a character.
2. demonstrate the ability to memorize.
3. demonstrate the quality of connection between characters.
4. commit themselves to be members of an acting ensemble.
5. demonstrate an ability to perform in a variety of theatrical styles.

Play Production: **Putting the process into application.**

F. **Goal: Students will understand the collaborative nature of theater and the many skills needed to prepare a finished production.**

Objectives. Students will

1. identify the duties of the director.
2. identify the duties of the stage manager.
3. identify the duties of the business manager, including that of publicity and box office.
4. design various technical elements (set, costumes, props, makeup, sound, lighting, technical direction).
5. identify the effects of light, sound and special effects upon the total production.
6. participate in at least one area of technical theater production.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL APPRECIATION

A. **Goal: Students will explore and understand theater's place in past, present and future societies as it relates to the individual; and its effects on those racial and ethnic traditions.**

Objectives. Students will

1. develop a positive self-image.

2. develop physical skills and an appreciation for the dignity of human labor.

3. demonstrate an understanding of past societies by studying theater and other arts as a racial and ethnic mirror of the times.

B. **Goal: Students will explore and understand theater history as it relates to world history and racial and ethic influences.**

Objectives. Students will

1. demonstrate a knowledge of major historical periods as they relate to dramatic literature and theatrical production.

2. identify theatrical practitioners of different racial and ethnic heritages and historical periods.

3. demonstrate a knowledge of the relevance and meaning of dramatic elements and theatrical terms in relationship to their point of origin and how they were/are used in those periods that follow.

C. **Goal: Students will explore and understand the national and racial and ethnic dissimilarities and commonalities that reveal universal human experiences and truths.**

Objectives. Students will

1. identify, explain and categorize universal themes that recur at different times in different cultures.

2. demonstrate knowledge that playwrights from all racial and ethnic heritages and historical periods have used the same ideas and subjects (universal human experiences and truths) to comment upon their societies.

AESTHETIC VALUING AND APPRECIATION

A. **Goal: Students will make informal judgments using internal and external questioning about drama and its relationship to histories, racial and ethnic influences, and environments of the world's people (global awareness).**

Objectives. Students will

1. reenact and evaluate one or more well-known fables, fairytales, or folktales.

2. evaluate, using internal and external questioning, theatrical productions, films, and television plays by recalling observations.

3. experience the same theatrical production in its written form, stage form, and film form; discuss the using of internal and external questioning differences; and state preferences using knowledge of dramatic elements.

4. modify production elements. After evaluating the modified elements, the students will use internal and external questioning to identity which modifications would be the most effective.

5. see, hear and enact more complex stories and plays from and about various other racial and ethnic heritages, past and present, and evaluate them using internal and external questioning.

6. compare and evaluate how theater reflects the racial and ethnic influences and the historical times in which they are produced.

7. evaluate the potential of theater to change behavior and society.

8. read and interpret current and historical professional drama criticism.

9. examine relationships among theater and other art forms.

10. discuss the statement, "Drama is in a continuous state of change."

B. **Goal: Students will evaluate a theatrical activity as a mirror of the human condition (man and his environment).**

Objectives. Students will

1. share perceptions of dramatic activities or performances using internal and external questioning.

2. recognize emotional connections through identification with others; i.e., empathy sympathy.

3. evaluate one's own work based on previously stated criteria.

4. discuss the statement, "Drama is not real life, but reflects a series of choices making it larger than life."

C. **Goal: Students will develop viewer (spectator, audience) skills.**

Objectives. Students will

1. focus concentration on a presentation.

2. respond to performances in positive, supportive and constructive ways.

3. recognize and encourage other students' abilities.

4. analyze the nature of one's own personal responses and those of others.

5. independently select challenging theatrical presentations.

6. discuss the statement, "The actor is different from the character portrayed."

D. **Goal: Students will develop the terminology necessary to express critical evaluations.**

Objectives. Students will

1. formulate and use criteria for judging theater aesthetically.

2. discuss the terminology of evaluation; i.e., intent, structure, effectiveness and worth.

3. evaluate by noting effective elements and making suggestions for improvement and/or exploration.

4. apply the terminology of evaluation in drawing conclusions about the qualities of the work seen or read.

5. make in-depth observations about character, character motivation, theme and plot.

6. read selected works from the fields of literary criticism, dramatic criticism, and aesthetics, and apply the principles to classroom and formal productions.

7. discuss a live performance (include script, acting, setting and costumes) using appropriate terminology.

8. expand criticism of live performance to include style, thematic unity, and other art elements, such as music and dance. Communicate this criticism to others.

9. identify the intent of dramatic choices in characterization, lighting, costumes, setting, and makeup, and evaluate their effectiveness.

10. write a review of a live performance that includes script, acting, setting and costumes.

E. Goal: Students will develop an appreciation for the cooperative nature of theater.

Objectives. Students will

1. identify the various contributors to a dramatic performance.

2. develop appreciation of the contributions of others to the creative activity.

3. develop awareness of the commitment and responsibility necessary to work cooperatively.

4. develop commitment and responsibility to the ensemble.

5. develop ability to give and receive supportive criticism.

6. constructively evaluate and justify one's own and another's works.